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## ISOLATION OR COÖPERATION IN INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS?

BY SAMUEL McCUNE LINDSAY,

Professor of Social Legislation, Columbia University.

A large and articulate section of American public opinion today seems to have learned nothing from the startling events of the present great international conflict, nothing from our experiences in the Spanish-American war, nothing from our success in transplanting the principles of democracy and civil liberty in the Philippines, Porto Rico and Cuba, nothing from the changed conditions of foreign trade, and is wholly unconscious and unmoved by the world forces that are making for internationalism in trade, culture, law and religion. If this is the real voice of America, or is to become such, there is very little use to talk about any program in international relations because we could hardly expect to participate in the making of a program which we consider remote to our interests and for which we assumed no responsibilities. Such an attitude unfortunately seems to have the sanction of good tradition and unhappily it harmonizes all too well with the selfish indulgences, the slothful intellectual perceptions and the benumbed moral senses of those elements of our population that have the largest share of the easily acquired and often illy-gotten gains of a period of great material prosperity. That such persons are living in a fool's paradise without security of tenure and with no guarantee of rights which others are bound to respect seems to make little difference.

When this nation was in its infancy with only a little over three millions of people occupying an undeveloped continent in very great physical isolation from the rest of the world by reason of the then existing means of communication, the great American patriot, Washington, solemnly advised against entangling European alliances and wisely regarded the business in hand of developing our own resources and building a nation as of such overwhelming importance to us that the dynastic quarrels and the political conflicts of the old world might well be considered no concern of ours. That advice, good as it was at the close of the eighteenth century, has become a

tradition, and, with but slight modification through the development of the Monroe doctrine which would seem to have brought at least the other countries of the two American continents within the scope of our legitimate international interests, it is now considered by some as a sanction for an American policy of isolation in world affairs at the beginning of the twentieth century.

However, we have not yet begun to think about international duties and responsibilities in a way that gives us any basis for an international policy. We have played too often the part of an irresponsible bully in our dealings with other nations and when they have tried to ascertain what we really seek to accomplish our only indication of a policy has been that we want to be let alone. The only reason we have not been treated as a bully deserves to be has probably been because the stronger nations of Europe have been too fully engrossed in watching each other to spare the time and effort to bring us to account. The isolation which we are supposed to stand for has become too artificial under conditions of modern communication and intercourse to be tenable even if it were justified by the most literal application of the traditional doctrines of Washington. It is high time that we reëxamine the premises on which Washington based his doctrine and apply the high patriotic spirit and insight of Washington to the complex situations in world affairs of today.

What we need in America just now, more than anything else, is a rebirth of patriotism, of love of our institutions, of devotion to individual liberty and the principles of democracy and of a desire to make these things live forever in the world and a determination to fight for their preservation in whatever quarter of the globe their permanency for us and for our children is assailed. We need a rebirth of just the kind of patriotism that Washington and those who had with him shared the sacrifice and the cost knew how to appreciate at its true value.

We are not yet a nation in much more than the outward appearances of nationality and some of the material resources for concerted action. We are still altogether too much a mere aggregation of discordant elements of various nationalities but with the richest possibilities of amalgamation which, once America responds to the call of nationality and comes to feel strongly for concerted action, may in a remarkably short time make her the dominant

exponent of democracy in the affairs of the whole world. This will not be the case, however, until we face about squarely in the matter of seeking a selfish isolation from the troubles of the old world and find in our own sense of growing power a willingness to serve the cause of humanity and to make the struggles of democracy akin throughout the world.

This does not mean that we are to flatter ourselves that we are entitled to assert any superiority of achievement in the working out of democracy in our own land or that we seek to impose on the world any obligation to conform to our institutions. We certainly have enough yet to do and territory enough of our own to conquer to make us humble and truly void of envy of the lands or the problems of other nations but we have had peculiarly favorable conditions for national growth and the results have abundantly justified our faith in the seeds of democracy and civil liberty that have been sown on our soil. We are expanding in our commerce and producing more than we need of an increasing variety of goods which meet human needs while at the same time our expanding culture is creating an increasing demand for products from the remote parts of the world which we can acquire only by trade and exchange of products. All of this is bound up intimately with our democracy and my sole contention in this connection is that we cannot develop the sort of civilization that these economic changes, partly of our own creation and partly due to world changes which we would be powerless to alter if we would, impose upon us if we imagine that it is possible or to our interest to try to build a Chinese wall around America and protect it from invasion from without or revolution from within. What is even more important, the sort of intercourse with the rest of the world which will promote our own development most will be that with democracies—industrial democracies—like our own, and hence we should lend every possible aid to the growth of industrial democracy, in every quarter and in every form it presents itself, in a spirit of international coöperation in the common tasks of democracy. This means an eventual program of peace, of course, because only under organized coöperation of the highest order in which conflicting interests are harmonized can democracy succeed, but it may mean a program of war in which democracies must prove their ability to defend their rights against exploiters and the champions of special privilege before a sufficiently large area of international

coöperation can be created to allow of the continuous peaceful growth of democracies. We shall need here in America to make common cause with the real democratic elements in European nations so as to assist those elements to become dominant in the public policies of their respective nations and to shape international relations in harmony with the conditions of growth in democracies. Those conditions involve increasingly, factors which are international in character and are already beyond the power of any one nation to control. International coöperation seems, therefore, essential to freedom of trade and intercourse on which our American democracy will increasingly depend for its very existence and the conditions which a century and a quarter ago may have justified a policy of isolation have so completely changed that they no longer play an important part in our national life. The very same reasoning that led us to that conclusion then will now dictate, on the premises of the world conditions of today, a policy of international coöperation and a new sense of international responsibility which America must assume in order to be true to her traditions and to preserve her institutions. We shall not concern ourselves any more now than heretofore with old world dynastic quarrels and European politics based on the intrigues and diplomacy of the past but we shall have to do our part to shape the new world-politics and bear our share of the burden of enlarging the scope of genuine democracy which requires ever an enlarging area in which to develop, if it is to endure and serve the needs of mankind.